HIROAKI SAMURA
BLADE
OF THE IMMORTAL
On Silent Wings
無限の住人

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

On Silent Wings

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BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

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On Silent Wings

DARK HORSE COMICS®

RIN'S BANE
Part 1

CURTAIN
OF
DEATH!

FLIGHT OF THE GOLDEN WASPS!!
THOK THOK

THREE.

HUH ?!
NO WAY! THAT'S ALL?
SEE FOR YOUR-SELF.

LOOK, RIN... THIS TREE'S ABOUT AS BIG AROUND AS YOUR AVERAGE GUY.
YOU THREW TWELVE, HIT THREE.
AND OUT OF THOSE, ONLY TWO GOT HIS UPPER BODY.
YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO GET AWAY WITH THAT ON A TARGET AS BIG AS KUROI SABATO...
...BUT IF YOU'RE TRYING TO NAIL A NORMAL HUMAN BEING WITH THIS KIND OF AIM...
...YOU'RE TAKING A BIG CHANCE.

USE YOUR HEAD, RIN!
LISTEN TO THIS KID! YOU THINK THIS IS LIKE PLAYING IN THE DŌJŌ?
LOTS OF TIMES I HIT WITH NINE OR TEN, EVEN!
I JUST SCREWED UP ON THIS ONE, THAT'S ALL!
LET'S MOVE ON.
KSAK
AH, HELL.
WHAT IF YOU'D BEEN FIGHTING SOMEONE TO THE DEATH?!
YOU THINK IT'S OKAY TO SCREW UP, YOU LITTLE FOOL?!

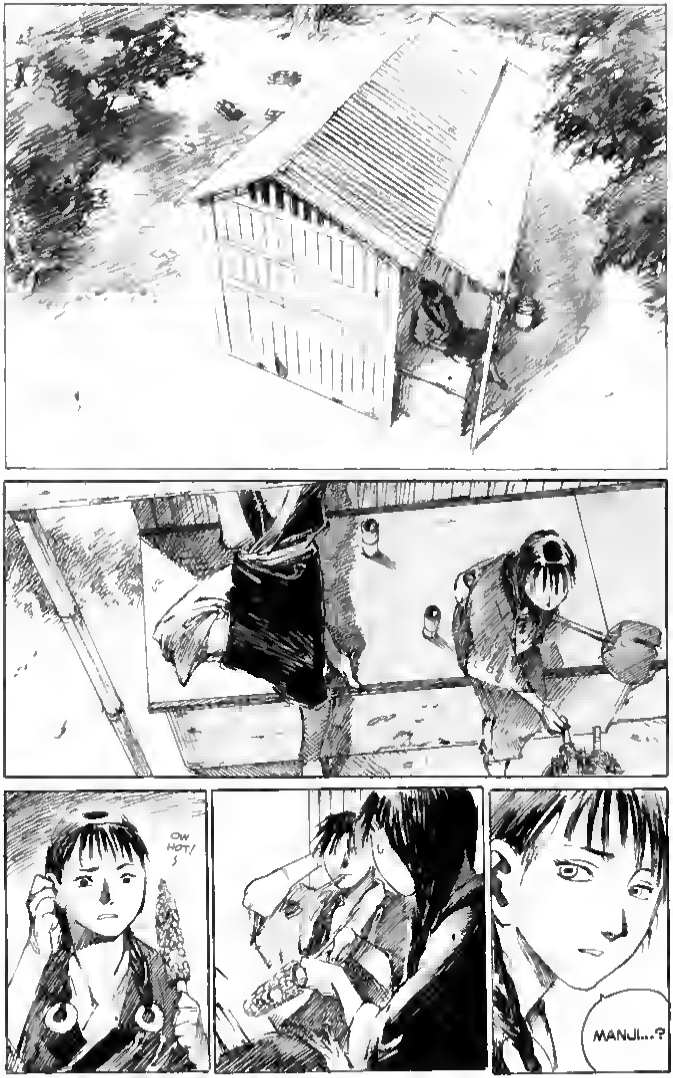
SHH

KRAK
KRAK
SHAKK
!!
HHK!

KYAK
AND SO... ONE CORPSE.
--YOU FLUNK.
LET ME GRADE YOU--

MAYBE YOU'D HOLD YOUR OWN AGAINST SOME THIRD-RATE AMATEUR.
BUT THOSE ITTO-RYU GUYS...? FIVE SECONDS, MAX.
YOU'D BE BETTER OFF RUNNING AWAY.
?
uhh...
-sniff-
-hhu-

OH, FOR...! STOP CRYING ALL THE TIME, YOU BIG BABY!
THE FIRST THING YOU'VE GOT TO LEARN IN SWORDSMANSHIP IS YOUR WEAKNESSES.
IF YOU'VE GOT TIME TO CRY, GO PRACTICE YOUR MOVES!
YOU'RE NOT GONNA LEARN A GOD-DAMN THING STANDING AROUND SNIVELLING!
I'M STARVED.
LET'S BREAK FOR LUNCH.


OW HOT!
MANJI...?

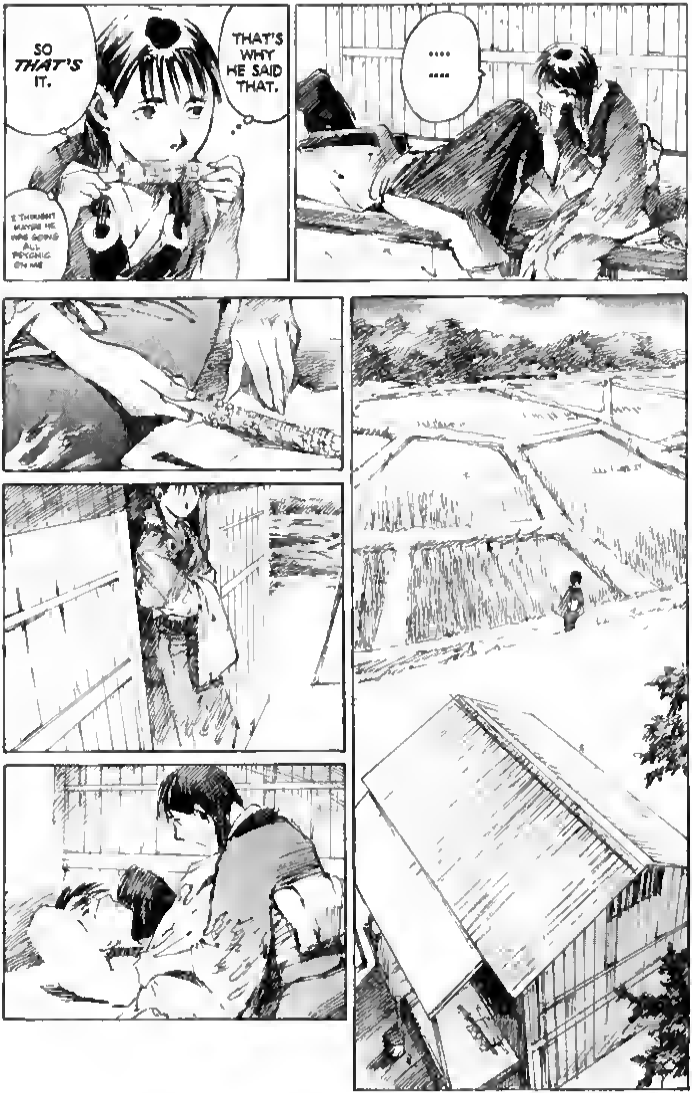
THE FIRST TIME I EVER MET YOU...
...WE ATE TOGETHER, HERE.
JUST LIKE THIS.
HUH? OH, YEAH.
OLD LADY YAOBIKUN TOLD ME TO HIRE MYSELF A BODY-GUARD.
OH, WHAT A GOOD IDEA, I THOUGHT. I'LL DO THAT, RIGHT AWAY.
IT WASN'T 'CAUSE I WAS SCARED... I MEAN, I WAS, BUT...
...YOU WANT TO KNOW THE REAL REASON?
I THOUGHT MAYBE IF I HUNG OUT WITH SOMEONE LIKE THAT, I'D GET BETTER, TOO.

I DUNNO... MAYBE I JUST DON'T HAVE THE GIFT...
BACK IN THE OLD DAYS, FATHER'S STUDENTS...
...THEY WERE ALWAYS TEACHING ME KATA WITH THEIR GOKUTŌ...
AFTER DADDY DIED, I PRACTICED MY SWORDWORK IN THE DŌJO, EVERY DAY, FOR TWO YEARS.
AND NOW I'VE BEEN WATCHING HOW YOU FIGHT, MANJI.
BUT IT'S LIKE, NOTHING'S GETTING BETTER AT ALL.
NOTHING.

GIMME A BREAK, GIRL!
LISTEN, RIN...
...IF YOU WERE FENCING WITH REAL KENSHI UNTIL YOU PUKED BLOOD EVERY DAY, THAT'D BE ONE THING.
BUT LEARNING KATA FROM A BUNCH OF BEGINNERS?
WAVING A BOKUTŌ AROUND ON A FLAT FLOOR WITH NO ONE FIGHTING BACK?!
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT SUPPOSED TO TEACH YOU?
IF YOU COULD BECOME A KENSHI BY PLAYING AROUND IN YOUR LIVING ROOM, NONE OF US'D EVER HAVE TO PRACTICE AGAIN!

WAY BACK WHEN... I WHACKED A HUNDRED SAMURAI IN JUST TWO YEARS.
BUT I TELL YA, UP AGAINST THESE ITTO-RYU GUYS I'M RIDING THE RAGGED EDGE.
THIS GUY YOU SEE SITTING RIGHT HERE SURVIVED THAT MANY DEATH MATCHES, RIGHT?
FACT IS, ALL THAT DOJO PRACTICE AIN'T WORTH A SHIT.
USE YOUR GODDAMN HEAD BEFORE YOU LAY THAT CRAP ON ME, GIRL.
YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT TALENT, ABOUT HAVING THE "GIFT"... DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH.

...IF HE'S TRYING TO CHEER ME UP... MAYBE?
I... I WONDER...
"YOUR FAMILY'S OLD PLACE...?
"WHAT? HERE?
"TOO MANY GHOSTS THERE... THE GHOSTS OF ALL THOSE DEAD STUDENTS."
"WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY DOJO?"


SO THAT'S IT.
THAT'S WHY HE SAID THAT.
I THOUGHT MAYBE HE WAS GOING ALL PSYCHIC ON ME
....
....

HE MIGHT WAKE UP FOR A WHILE

AND SO...
TRAINING OUT HERE IN THE WOODS MAY SOUND COOL...
BUT AFTER THREE DAYS WITHOUT A BATH...
...WELL, I AM A WOMAN, AFTER ALL.

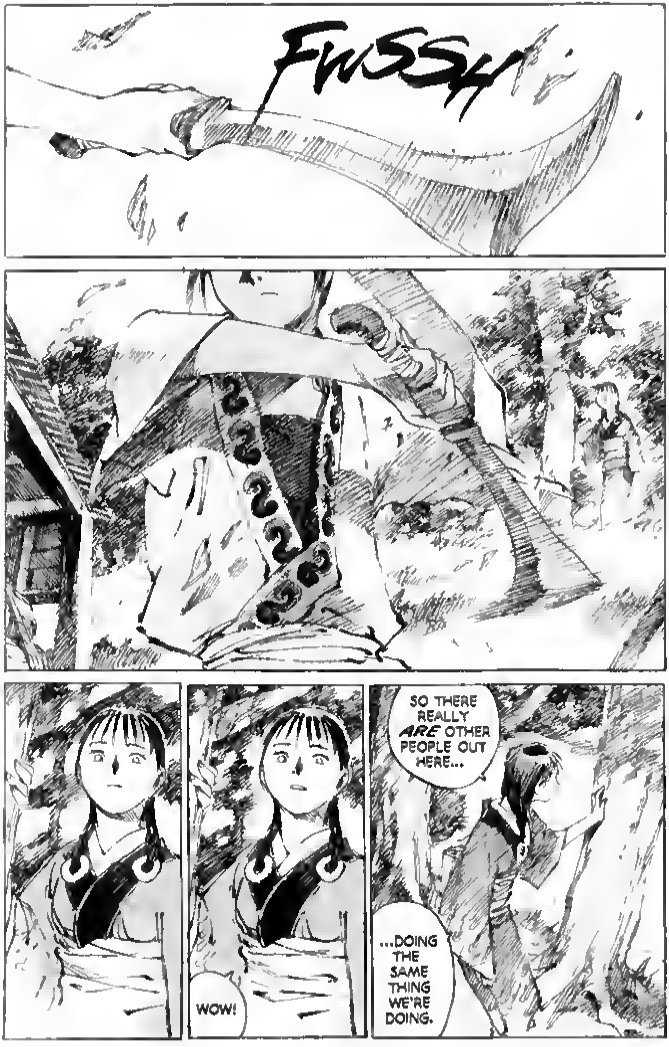
WEE-
HOO!
COLD!

I CAN'T BATHE IN THAT!
I MEAN TO CATCH MY DEATH.
I'LL JUST DO MY HAIR.

....
...?
WAS THAT ...?
KSSHING
MANJI...?!

CHIRP
WHISSHT
FIGURES... AS SOON AS I TRY TO WASH UP!
KLIK

FWHIPP

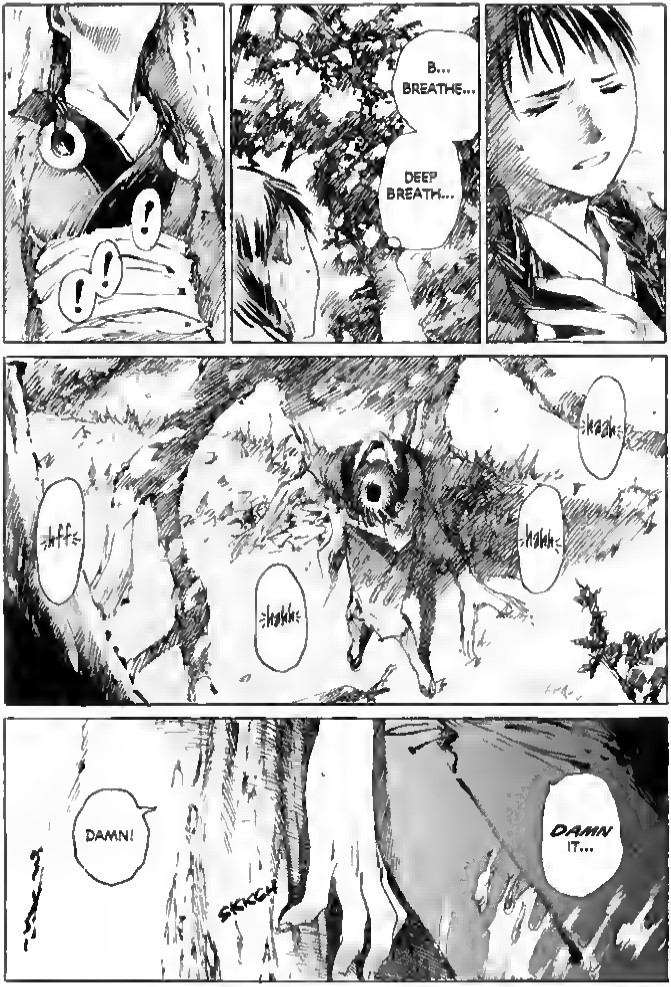

FWSSH
SO THERE REALLY *ARE* OTHER PEOPLE OUT HERE...
...DOING THE SAME THING WE'RE DOING.
WOW!

HE'S STRIKING AT FALLING LEAVES...
...AND HE'S GETTING EVERY ONE!
AND HE'S NOT EVEN LOOKING AT THEM!
INCREDI-BLE...!

GOD... IT REALLY MAKES ME...
...WANT TO HAVE THAT KIND OF SKILL.
I WONDER IF... SOMEDAY...
...I'LL BE LIKE THAT...?
BUT...
PHEWW
!

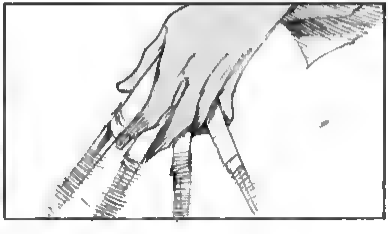
:kshh:
:kshh:

WHO'S THERE?!
IF YOU'RE A KENSHI, COME ON OUT!
AND IF YOU LIKE, FIND OUT HOW GOOD YOU REALLY ARE!


!
!!
B...
BREATHE...
DEEP
BREATH...
:haah:
:haah:
:haah:
:hff:
DAMN!
SKKCH
DAMN
IT...

MY GOLDEN WASPS... TWENTY-FOUR IN ALL.
TWO SETS.
BUT AT THIS DISTANCE HE'LL SEE ME...
...BEFORE I THROW.
"...YOU'RE TAKING A BIG CHANCE."
I'M NOT JUST SOME WEAKLING GIRL HE'S PROTECTING.
I'M NOT!
I... I'M NOT...

YOU! ARE YOU DEAF?
WHOO
HMM... MAYBE NOT.
SKSSH



FLIGHT OF THE GOLDEN WASPS!!

GOT HIM!

THOK THOK TING THOK

LITTLE GIRL...
DO YOU WISH TO DIE...?

RIN'S BANE
Part 2

I.. I'M GOING..
...TO DIE.

GIRL, DON'T TELL ME...
...THOSE WERE YOUR ONLY WEAPONS?

IT'S NOT POLITE TO INSULT YOUR ENEMIES!

I... I'M A KENSHI, TOO!
SORT OF
HERE I AM RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU—

...AND YOU JUST LEAVE YOUR WEAPON WHERE YOU DROPPED IT? WHO'S INSULTING WHOM HERE?!
WHA--?!
I CAN'T...

GZZT!
AH?!
AAAH!
THUD
FWHUMP
I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
HE WAS SWINGING THIS AROUND LIKE IT WAS NOTHING!

NG!
AAH!

HNN.
I'M A FOOL. A LITTLE FOOL.
MANJI, FORGIVE ME...

TRYING THIS BY MYSELF...

WITHOUT YOU HERE...

WHY DID I THINK I COULD BEAT HIM...?

GIRL, I--
HUH!
HEH, HEH, HEH... WELL, WELL.
YOU'VE GROWN UP IN UNEXPECTED WAYS..!
...FOR THE DAUGHTER OF KUROSE ASANO!

BUT YOU KNOW, THAT TECHNIQUE OF YOURS IS A LITTLE TOO HAP-HAZARD...
...DON'T YOU THINK?
I MEAN, FOR ONE THING, YOU HAVE TO TAKE YOUR EYES OFF YOUR ENEMY DURING YOUR RELEASE.
IT'S ONLY GOOD FOR SURPRISE AND DIS-TRACTION.
KA-KOK!
.....
.....

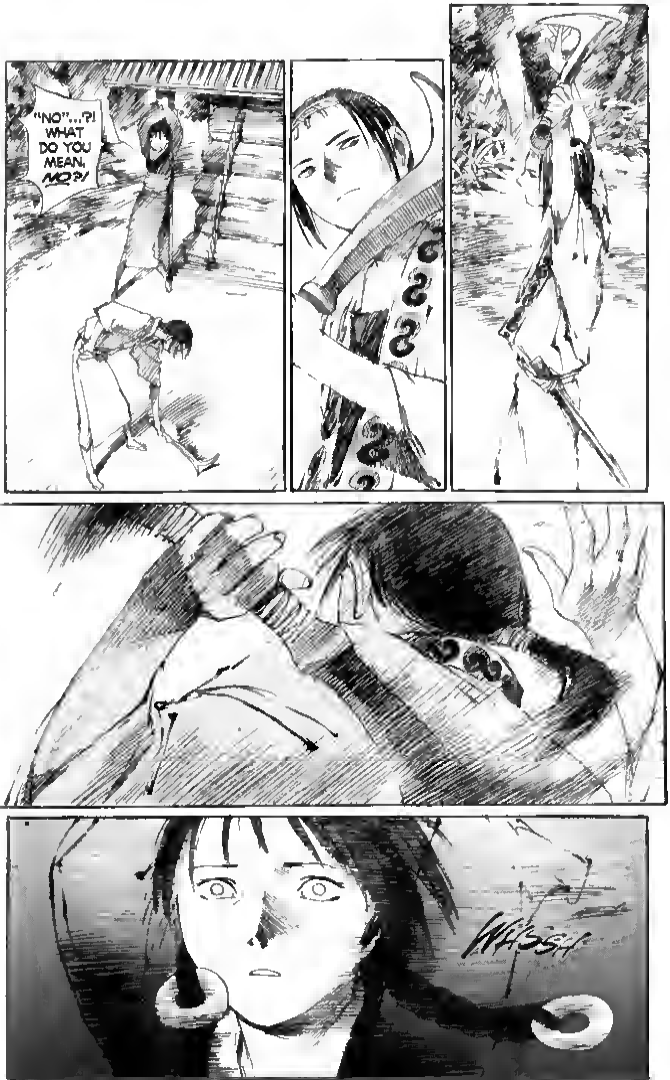
...
...
;sniff
;hikk;
KOFF
KOFF
HAKK

-sniff-
-sniff-
WHY DO YOU CRY?
I HAVE THE MAN I WANT TO KILL STANDING THERE RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES...
BECAUSE I'M FRUSTRATED!
WHAT DO YOU THINK?!
AND I CAN'T...
I CAN'T DO A DAMN THING ABOUT IT!
SO... WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?
YOU GOING TO RIP OFF MY CLOTHES AND RAPE ME OR SOMETHING?

I'D BITE MY TONGUE OFF AND KILL MYSELF!
I WOULD PREFER THAT.
AND IF I DID?
AND IF I CHOOSE TO KILL YOU RIGHT NOW?
SO WHY DON'T YOU? GO ON!
DAMN!
I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND IT.
THE EAGERNESS ALL YOU SAMURAI HAVE TO DIE.

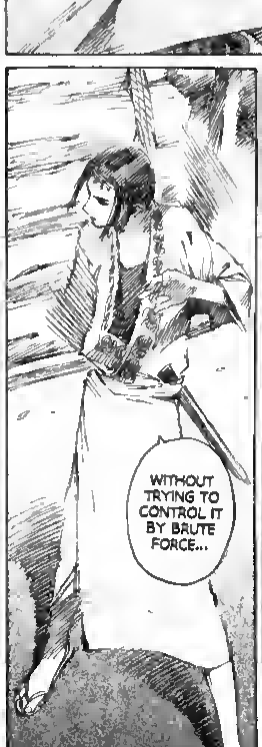
WHERE DOES IT COME FROM? BUSHIDŌ?
HOW.
...HOW CAN I ANSWER THAT?
I'M NOT A TRUE SAMURAI.
AT BEST, I'M JUST A KENSHI.
I ONLY TOOK UP THE SWORD...
BECAUSE I WANTED TO KILL THE MAN WHO MURDERED MY MOTHER AND MY FATHER! THAT'S ALL!!
THEN WHY DON'T YOU BEG FOR YOUR LIFE?
AFTER ALL, IF YOU CAN LEAVE HERE ALIVE, YOU MIGHT HAVE OTHER CHANCES TO KILL ME.

Y-YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS!
YOU, WHO KILLED MY FATHER FOR NOTHING!
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS!
IS IT BECAUSE I'M STILL A KID...
...SO YOU FEEL SORRY FOR ME?! HAH! DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!
....
NO.

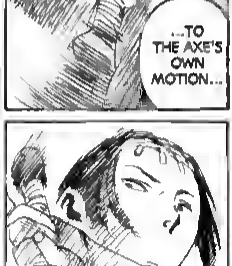

"NO"...?! WHAT DO YOU MEAN, NO?!
WHOSH

WHSSH
WHSSH
WHAP

WELL...?
WHAT A WEIRD AXE!
ISN'T A NIHON-TŌ EASIER TO USE?
CERTAINLY. BOTH IN MANEUVER-ABILITY AND CUTTING EDGE...
...THERE MAY BE NOTHING IN THE WORLD THAT CAN MATCH A JAPANESE SWORD.
AND YET...


WITHOUT TRYING TO CONTROL IT BY BRUTE FORCE...

...BY SIMPLY ADDING THE SLIGHTEST NUDGE...
...TO THE AXE'S OWN MOTION...


...EVEN MY THIN ARMS CAN MASTER IT.

SUPPOSING...
WHOO
..SOMEONE'S ALREADY SEEN THROUGH MY MOVES ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

..I CAN SHATTER NOT ONLY THE SWORD HE FLINGS UP TO BLOCK ME BUT THE SKULL BEHIND IT AS WELL.

WITH AN AXE LIKE THIS..

MY GRANDFATHER WAS DRIVEN OUT OF YOUR *MUTENICHI-RYŪ*..
..FOR USING A FOREIGN SWORD.

I CARRY THIS WEAPON TO PROVE...
...THAT MY GRAND-FATHER WAS RIGHT.
AND I KILLED YOUR FATHER SO MY GRANDFATHER'S SOUL COULD REST IN PEACE.
AT LEAST, THAT'S THE OFFICIAL REASON.
BUT EVEN WITHOUT THOSE SPECIAL CIRCUM-STANCES...
..I WOULD HAVE KILLED HIM ANYWAY... SIMPLY BECAUSE IT'S BETTER THAT WAY.
BETTER THAT PEOPLE LIKE HIM VANISH FROM THIS EARTH!

KRAK
I WON'T KILL YOU. NOT HERE, NOT NOW.
IN TIME, ONE OF MY FOLLOWERS WILL NO DOUBT KILL YOU BOTH.
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO DIE, FORGET ABOUT ME.
WH... WHY..?

WHY DID YOU HATE MY FATHER SO MUCH?!
DID HE EVER DO ANYTHING TO YOU?!

IT WASN'T HATE. NO...
...IT WAS MY WAY OF INTERROGATING HIM. AS A KENSHI.

"INTERROGATING HIM"...?!
WAIT...!

PLEASE, WAIT!!

I... I HAVE A RIGHT TO HEAR THIS!
DON'T I...?

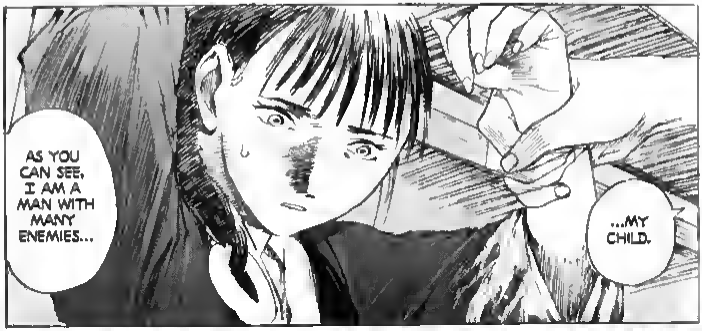
ISN'T THAT WHY YOU CAME UP WITH THAT... AMUSING LITTLE TECHNIQUE OF YOURS?
SO SORRY YOU FIND IT "AMUSING"...!!
HUH? UH, OF COURSE...
TELL ME, GIRL...
...ARE YOU ALWAYS TRYING TO BECOME A MORE LETHAL WARRIOR?
TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO, ON THE FIELDS OF SHITARAGABARA IN MIKAWA... THE COMBINED ARMIES OF ODA NOBUNAGA DEPLOYED MASSED FIREARMS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN JAPAN.
A MERE THREE THOUSAND MATCHLOCK RIFLES SHATTERED THE INVINCIBLE CAVALRY OF TAKEDA SHINGEN.

...?
"MOVE FORWARD FIFTY YEARS...TO THE ERA OF KANEI... AND THE RENOWNED MIYAMOTO MUSASHI. MUSASHI BELIEVED THAT A SWORD SHOULD BE WIELDED BY ONE HAND INSTEAD OF TWO.
"TAKING HIS OWN SWORDS ONE IN EACH HAND, HE FOUNDED THE NITOICHI-RYU!"
IS THERE ANYONE ALIVE TODAY WHO WOULD POINT TO NOBUNAGA AND MUSASHI AND CALL THEM COWARDS...? NO...THEY WERE THE SAME AS YOU.
THEY JUST USED THEIR HEADS, DRIVEN BY THE SIMPLE DESIRE TO DESTROY THEIR ENEMIES!
IF THIS IS COWARDLY, THEN ISN'T THE CAVALRY SOLDIER A COWARD FOR RUNNING THE FOOT SOLDIER THROUGH WITH A LANCE?!
AM I WRONG, GIRL?
EH?! I, UH...
NO... I D-DON'T THINK SO...

AS FOR ME, I SAY THE ONLY TRULY OUTSTANDING WARRIORS OR KENSHI OR WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL THEM ARE THE ONES THAT TRY ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING TO MAKE THEMSELVES MORE DEADLY.
YOU SEE...
...WE LIVE IN A PEACEFUL AGE, AND YET THE NUMBER OF SWORD SCHOOLS CONTINUES TO GROW.
BUT THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH A FLOWERING OF THE WAY OF THE SWORD.
FAR FROM IT! THEIR SCHOOLS EXIST ONLY TO PAD THEIR POCKETS.
THEY TEACH THE DAIMYŌ AND THEIR HANSHI OLD, STERILE KATA WITH BAMBOO SWORDS...
...AND COLLECT THEIR MONEY. PRAISE AND PAY-- THAT'S ALL THEY'RE FOR!

WELL, THOSE PEOPLE CAN USE THEIR SWORDS HOWEVER THEY PLEASE.
BUT... WHEN I THINK ABOUT THIS SYSTEM I'M TORN BY DOUBTS.
AND THAT'S WHY WE...
...WE OF THE ITTŌ-RYŪ DON'T GIVE A DAMN WHAT KIND OF WEAPON OR TECHNIQUE YOU USE TO WIN, AS LONG AS IT'S YOU AGAINST THEM...
...ONE ON ONE!

WE ARE A SCHOOL THAT HAS NO SCHOOL. WE WILL NOT BE BOUND BY BUSHIDŌ... AT LEAST, NOT BUSHIDŌ LIKE YOUR FATHER'S. ALL MANNER AND POSES AND FACE. A WARRIOR'S WAY IN WORDS ONLY.
WE DO NOT LOSE OUR WARRIOR SOULS!
WE'RE WILLING TO GAMBLE WITH OUR LIVES TO TEAR DOWN THE WALLS BETWEEN THE SWORD SCHOOLS. AND UNTIL WE SUCCEED...
!
...I DON'T CARE IF YOU CONSIDER ME THE DEVIL HIMSELF!


AS YOU CAN SEE, I AM A MAN WITH MANY ENEMIES...
...MY CHILD.

THERE ARE VERY FEW DAYS YOU WILL FIND ME SITTING IN MY DŌJŌ, ANY MORE THAN I AM TODAY.

LET ME ELUDE YOU NOW. AND IT MAY BE YEARS BEFORE WE MEET AGAIN.

DO WITH THEM AS YOU PLEASE.
THESE I RETURN TO YOU.

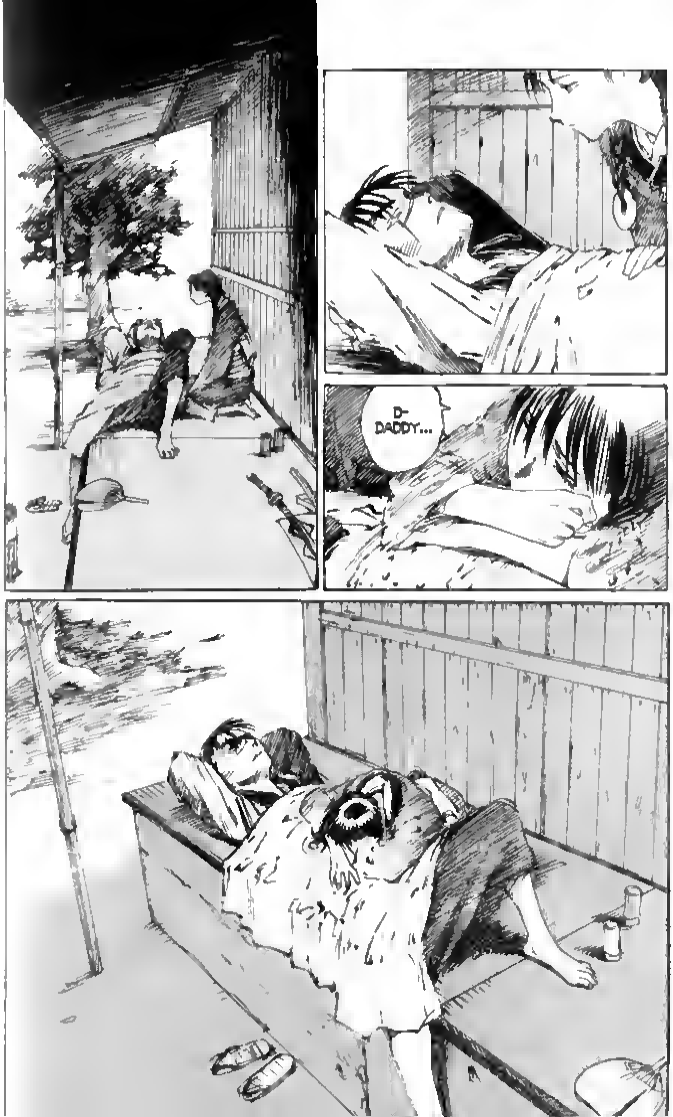
W-WAIT...
PLEASE, JUST TELL ME ONE THING.
WHY... WHY DO YOU LEAVE ME HERE, ALIVE?
EVEN THOUGH I'M THE SAME AS MY FATHER... THE HEAD OF THE MUTENICHI-RYŪ!
EVEN THOUGH I...I... I TRY...
I'M TRYING... TO KILL YOU...

YOUR EYES. THEY LOOK IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION THAN THOSE OF YOUR FATHER.
IF YOU STRICTLY FOLLOW THE RULES OF THE MUTENICHI-RYŪ, THEN THOSE THROWING KNIVES YOU USE...
. .ARE A HERESY. SURELY YOU UNDERSTAND THAT...?
AND YET YOU WERE WILLING TO CROSS THAT LINE TO BEST ME.
AREN'T YOU THE BOLD AND IMPUDENT ONE. Hmm?

YOU NO LONGER BELONG TO THE MUTENICHI-RYŪ.
YOU'RE HALFWAY TO BEING ONE OF US.
GOOD-BYE, GIRL.
DEVOTE YOURSELF TO THE PATH!
I... I'M NOT!

hahhh
hahhh
hahhh
hahhh
hahhh
hahhh
hahhh
hahhh

....
...wng
WHAT..
S-SO...?
;snff;
YOU B-BASTARD...!!
...WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO NOW?!


D-
DADDY...

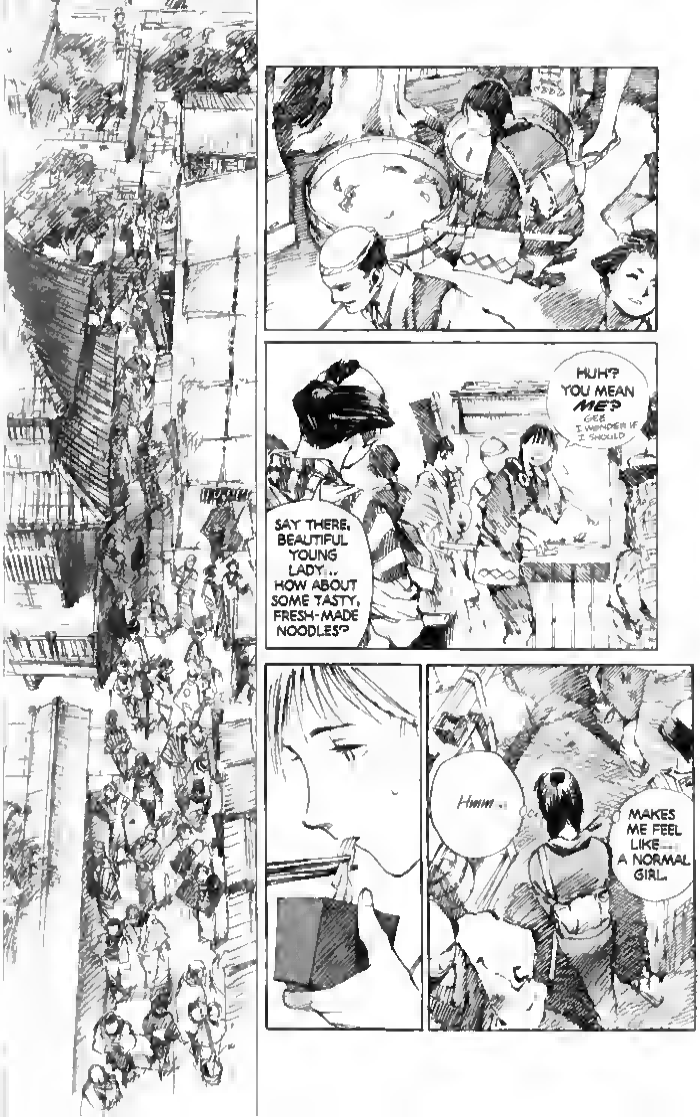
ON SILENT WINGS

Part 1

MANJI! MANJI!
CHECK IT OUT!
AW, C'MON-- SAY SOME-THING!
LIKE "YOU'RE CUTE" OR "THE GUYS'LL WHISTLE AT YOU" OR SOMETHING.
DOESN'T SUIT YOU.

YOU SAID YOU JUST WANTED TO HANG OUT.
HOW COME YOU'RE BUYING SOMETHING, ANYWAY?
...
SO... HOW MUCH WAS IT?
UM.. FORTY MON.
YEP. SAKE!
AREN'T YOU GETTING ANYTHING, MANJI?
WHY THE HELL DO YOU BLOW MONEY LIKE THAT?
YOU'VE GOT A FIFTY MON SPENDING LIMIT TODAY, YOU KNOW.
'CAUSE IT'S MY MONEY!!
BUT YOU CAN BUY THAT ANY TIME! TODAY'S A HOLIDAY! SOMETIMES YOU'RE SO DUMB!!
YEAH, YEAH, WHATEVER YOU SAY.
SO HOW ABOUT WE FIND AN INN...?

Hmph...!
...BUT SHE'S BEEN AWFULLY DOWN THE LAST COUPLE 'A DAYS.
AH HELL. LET HER HAVE HER FUN. I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS -.
IF ALL IT TAKES TO CHEER HER UP IS BLOWING SOME CASH AT A FESTIVAL, GREAT.


SAY THERE, BEAUTIFUL YOUNG LADY.. HOW ABOUT SOME TASTY, FRESH-MADE NOODLES?
HUH? YOU MEAN ME?
GEE, I WONDER IF I SHOULD
Hmm..
MAKES ME FEEL LIKE--- A NORMAL GIRL.

IN THE OLD DAYS...
...MOM AND DAD WOULD HAVE BEEN HERE WITH ME.
BUT NOW... I'M ALL ALONE.
....
I JUST...
WHAT SHOULD I HAVE DONE...?
WHEN HE SAID THAT. .?

"YOU LOOK IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION THAN YOUR FATHER..."
SHUT UP!

WHUDD
BETTER STOP THINKING ABOUT IT.
KINDA DANGEROUS.
YEAH.. SOONER OR LATER..
...I'LL FIND THE ANSWER.

MAYBE I'LL BUY SOME MOCHI... ONE FOR MANJI, TOO?
YEAH.. MIGHT AS WELL.
Um, HI. I'D LIKE
GIMME FIVE OF 'EM!!
WHUD
HO! YER A SPUNKY LITTLE FELLER!
TELL YA WHAT! HOW ABOUT SIXTEEN FOR THE LOT?
ALL RIGHT!! YOU'RE A COOL GUY!
EXCUSE ME, KID, BUT--
COOL GUY, HUH, SIS?!
YEAH SOME PEOPLE CALL ME COOL
WELL, Um.. I GUESS SO.

BUT THAT'S NOT THE POINT! LOOK, WHAT YOU DID JUST NOW, CHILD..
..IN THE ADULT WORLD WE CALL IT "CUTTING IN LINE"..!
GET IT...?
DON'T CALL ME A KID! I AIN'T NO KID!!
BESIDES, IT WAS YOUR FAULT FOR STANDING AROUND LIKE A GOOF INSTEAD OF ORDERING RIGHT AWAY!
I'M A WOMAN, OKAY? I CAN'T GO AROUND SCREAMING AND SHOUTING AND PUSHING INTO LINES!
HEY, YA SNOOZE, YA LOSE.
NOW LOOK HERE, YOU!
IT'S NOT VERY MANLY TO SHOVE A WOMAN THEN NOT EVEN APOLOGIZE, YOU KNOW!

HEY, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAID I'M JUST A KID!
WHY YOU SNOT-NOSED LITTLE BRAT!!
GET A GRIP, RIN!
CAN'T LOSE IT OVER SOME KID.
THAT'S RIGHT!
I'M A MATURE WOMAN!
SO? WHAT'S YER POINT?
LOOK... WHY DON'T YOU JUST BUY SOME ALREADY, INSTEAD OF PISSING AND MOANING, HUH?
IT AIN'T LIKE HE'S SOLD OUT OR NOTHIN', AND HE'S SURE NOT GOIN' ANYWHERE.
...
OH, VERY WELL THEN.
I'LL LET YOU OFF THE HOOK THIS TIME.

WELL THEN... HMM...
LET'S SEE... I'LL TAKE TWO, PLEASE!
EIGHT *MON*, MA'AM.
THANKS, MA'AM!
...
...
SO... YOU GONNA EAT 'EM, SIS?
HOW ABOUT I STUFF THEM DOWN YOUR THROAT?!

YOU'RE LOOKING KINDA BORED, PAL.

I'M A SERIOUS DRINKER LIKE YOU, MY FRIEND. 'COURSE, I'D LOVE TO SAVE MY CASH AND BUT A PRETTY COMB FOR MY HONEY INSTEAD.
HUH?
BUT I CAN'T DO IT 'CAUSE I DON'T GOT NO HONEY TO GIVE IT TO.
LOOK... I SAY IF YOU GOT A CUTE LITTLE THING LIKE HER IN YOUR LIFE...
...YOU SHOULD SHOW HER A GOOD TIME!
LIFE'S A BITCH, AIN'T IT, MY FRIEND?
A FESTIVAL... Hmm.
YEAH, WELL... I LIKE THINGS LIVELY, BUT...

SOME-
HOW
FOR
ME..
...IT'S LIKE
I'M SEEING
IT LONG
AGO AND
FAR AWAY.
I CAN'T GET
INTO IT.
I GUESS
THERE'S NO
PLACE FOR ME
IN THE NORMAL
WORLD ANY
MORE.

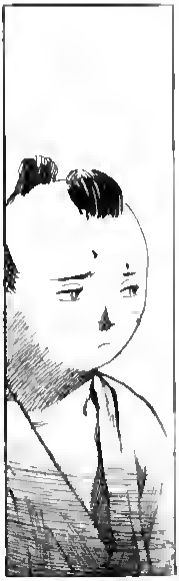
..?
WEIRD.

.....
.....
HEY.
I'LL TAKE THIS ONE.
YOU MIND HOLDING ON FOR A FEW SECONDS, GOOD SIR?
I'VE GOT A BIT OF A PROBLEM TO FIX UP, HERE.

SO, YOU TWO...
...WHICH OF YOU IS YOUNGER?
HOW COME?
I FIGURE IT'D BE FASTER TO FIGHT FOR IT.
BECAUSE THIS IS MY ONE AND ONLY *TENGU*.

BUT IF YOU DID, MAYBE THE MASK WOULD GET BROKEN.
AND NO MATTER WHO WON, YOU'D NEVER BE GOOD PALS AGAIN, HUH?
INSTEAD OF BEING HAPPY AT WINNING, YOU'D JUST FEEL SORT OF.. EMPTY.
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO LOSE WHAT REALLY MATTERS...
...YOU'VE GOT TO AVOID *THAT*, WHATEVER YOU DO.

GOOD! THEN ..
..THE LITTLE LADY GETS IT. OKAY...?



YOU'RE A REAL MAN.
sniff
UH, OH... CAN'T KEEP UP APPEARANCES ANYMORE, EH...?
HERE.
IT'S FREE. JUST FOR YOU.
D-DON'T WANT THAT OL' THING.
"THAT OLD THING" ..? C'MON, KID
..NEVER LOOK A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH.

'SCUSE ME. BUT DO YOU MIND LOANING ME ONE OF YOUR SWORDS FOR A MINUTE'?
GOOD SIR!
IF YOU DON'T MIND ..
.....
.....

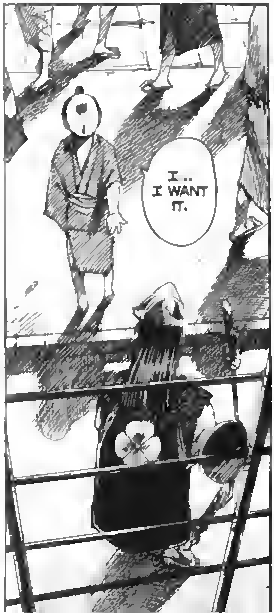
THANKS, PAL.
WATCH THIS, KID.

KGGH

……
ハハハ
は

WELL...?
HOW ABOUT IT NOW?

IT'S WEIRD.
GUESS IT'S A BIT TOO ARTISTIC FOR A KID.
Hmm...
WELL, THAT'S LIFE.


I.. I WANT IT.

...

YOU'RE QUITE A GUY.

Oh... SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING.

THEY'RE EIGHT *MON* EACH.

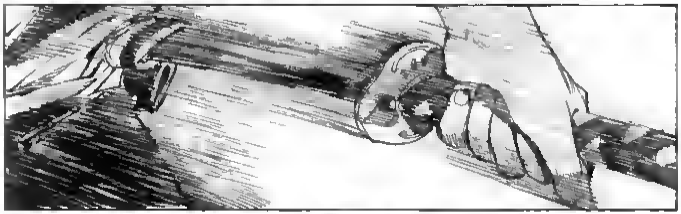
GOOD SIR...
...YOUR SWORD .. HAS HAD ITS FILL OF BLOOD.
YOU MIND GIVING MY SWORD BACK...?
?

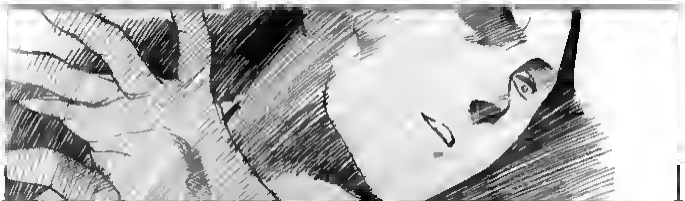
NO KIDDING...?
YOU COUNTED THE STAINS OR SOME-THING?
YEAH. SOME-THING LIKE THAT.
THIS IS IMPRES-SIVE, REALLY IS.
BY NOW IT MUST BE ONE HUNDRED .. NO, MORE THAN THAT.
AND JUST SINCE THE START OF THIS YEAR ..
...TEN. HOW'S THAT?
PRETTY CLOSE?

HEH, HEH, HEH!
THIS IS PRICE-LESS.
YOU MIND IF I ASK YOU ONE QUES-TION?

THIS ONE'S BEEN BUGGING ME FOR A WHILE NOW.
YOU DAMNED ITTŌ-RYŪ GUYS...
...WHY IS IT I FIND YOU EVERY-WHERE I GO?
I MEAN, YOU GOT A FLAG TIED TO MY ASS, OR WHAT?
HEH. GOOD SIR...
...IT SEEMS YOU'VE GOT SOME STRANGE IDEAS.
NO ONE IN THE ITTŌ-RYŪ HAS ANY INTER-EST IN KEEPING TRACK OF WHERE YOU'RE GOING.

YOU CAN SEE FOR YOUR-SELF...
...THAT WE DON'T EVEN SPEND MUCH TIME TO-GETHER.
SO LONG AS ANOTSU DOESN'T CALL US IN...
.. MOSTLY WE JUST WANDER AROUND, KICKING UP THE DUST, TRYING TO SURVIVE.
THE ONLY THING WE'VE BEEN TOLD ABOUT GUYS LIKE YOU...
...IS "SEE THEM, KILL THEM!"
SO NOW, IF YOU DON'T MIND...
SHKK





DAD!!
RENZO...?

DAD... WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
GOOD SIR...
I'M SORRY... MY APOLOGIES.
YOU CAN HAVE THIS BACK.

DON'T WORRY, RENZO.
IT WAS NOTHING. YOUR FATHER WAS JUST BEING DUMB.

THIS... GENTLE-MAN- CRITICIZED MY WORK.
AND I'M AFRAID I GOT KIND OF PISSED OFF.

SORRY ABOUT THAT, PAL.
I'VE GOT THIS SHORT FUSE, SEE?

YEAH, NO SWEAT.

SO, DID YOU BUY US SOME RICE CAKES?
YEP!
THEN LET'S MAKE AN OFFERING AT MOM'S GRAVE!

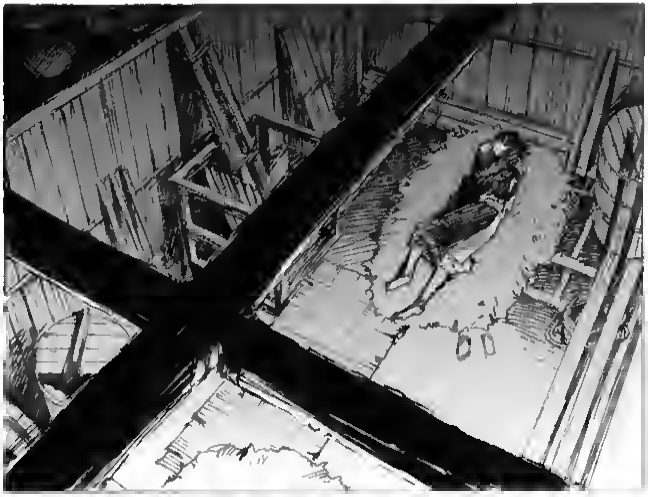
GOOD SIR... TAKE ONE YOU LIKE OFF THE RACK.
BUT IF YOU APPRECIATE KAWAKAMI ARAYA'S MASKS...
...THEN YOU ARE ONE TWISTED GUY!

AH?
RIN!
WHERE THE HELL DID YOU GO, ALL BY YOURSELF?!

IT... IT'S *HIM*...

ON SILENT WINGS

Part 2


VZZZZZZT
SMAK
...!

HEY, RIN! YOU GOT ANY NETTING OVER THERE TO KEEP THESE DAMN MOSQUITOS OUT?!
RIN...?
...?
?!

THEY'RE GONNA SUCK YOU DRY IF--
HUH?!
RIN! HEY!!
SLASH
ARE YOU SICK OR--

DON'T YOU EVER GET TIRED OF CRYING?
WHY DON'T YOU TRY TO GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP FOR ONCE?
LET ME... HOLD ON A WHILE.
IF I DON'T...
...MY HEART MAY FLY APART.

MAKIE SAID SOMETHING TO ME.. JUST WORDS...
..BUT THEY CUT INTO MY SOUL LIKE A KNIFE.
SHE'S RIGHT, YOU KNOW.
LOOK AT REVENGE FROM THE OUTSIDE, AND IT'S JUST BARREN, POINTLESS MURDER.
EVEN WHAT HE'S TRYING TO DO... IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
BUT, BUT.. IF IT'S TRUE...
..AND IF WHAT HE SAID IS TRUE...

YOU MET ANOTSU ..?
I TOLD MYSELF TO FORGET.
I'LL NEVER FORGIVE HIM.
BUT... AT THE VERY LEAST...
WHAT DO I DO WITH THEM?
WHERE DO I KEEP THESE FEELINGS?

...UNTIL I CAN DECIDE IF WHAT HE SAID IS RIGHT, OR WRONG...
...I THOUGHT I SHOULDN'T KILL FOR REVENGE.
BUT... I CAN'T. I CAN'T!
EVEN TODAY, THE MOMENT I REALIZED THAT MAN WAS ITTO-RYU...
...I COULD THINK WAS— KILL THE BASTARD!
AND IT HAD BEEN SO NICE TODAY... SO MUCH... FUN...
LOOK HERE, RIN...

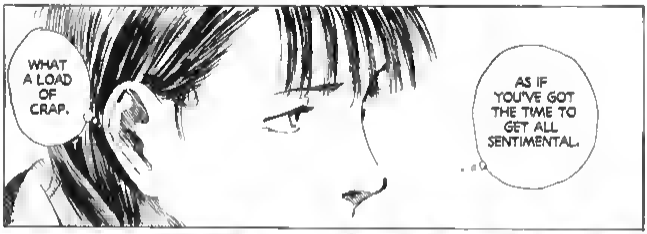
WELL?
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL ME? IS THAT ALL YOUR PARENTS' LIVES MEAN TO YOU?
SO YOU GONNA LET THAT SCUM TALK YOU OUT OF FIGHTING BACK OR WHAT?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT KINDA CRAP ANOTSU LAID ON YOU, BUT YOU CAN BARELY KEEP YOUR SHIT TOGETHER, THAT'S FOR SURE.
N-NO. I'M SORRY.
GOD... I DISGUST MYSELF.
WHEN I WAS FOURTEEN...
...I WOULDN'T HAVE HESITATED A MOMENT. BUT IT'S BEEN TWO YEARS...

TWO YEARS OF DRIFTING..
AND I'VE BECOME SUCH A COWARD.
I'M WEIGHING WHAT HE SAYS, PUTTING IT ON THE SAME SCALES AS THE LIVES OF MY OWN PARENTS.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M DOING IT!
NEITHER CAN I.
I'M DISAP-POINTED IN YOU, RIN.
WOW.. NO REAC-TION. ..?!

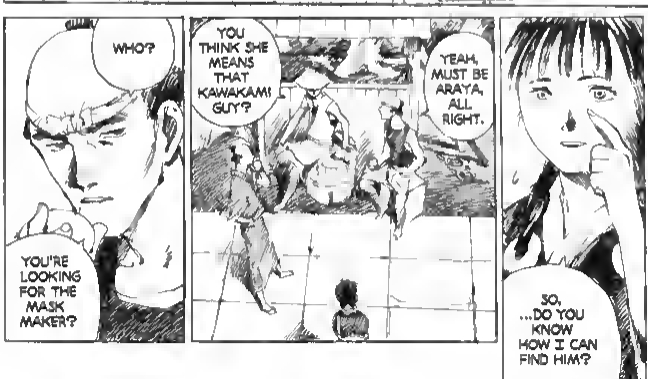
YOU STILL AWAKE, KID?
YEAH.
I REMEMBER YOU SAYING SOMETHING ONCE.
YOU SAID WE DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO WASTE ON OTHER SWORDSMEN UNTIL WE TOOK OUT ANOTSU.
KUROI SABATO, THE GUY WHO ACTUALLY KILLED YOUR DAD. .HE'S LONG GONE.
LOOK .. I'D UNDERSTAND IF IT WAS ANOTSU BACK THERE.
BUT WHY DID YOU FREAK OUT WHEN YOU SAW ARAYA?

MANJI...
MANJI, IF YOUR OWN...
WHAT?
NOTHING. FORGET IT.

THE PARTY'S OVER...
...AND EVERY-THING FEELS SO LONELY.


WHAT A LOAD OF CRAP.
AS IF YOU'VE GOT THE TIME TO GET ALL SENTIMENTAL.

I THOUGHT HE'D BE HERE AGAIN TODAY.
GUESS MAYBE I SHOULD START GETTING UP EARLIER, HUH?
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO PACK UP AND CLEAR OUT SO FAST, MASK MAKER!


WHO?
YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE MASK MAKER?
YOU THINK SHE MEANS THAT KAWAKAMI GUY?
YEAH, MUST BE ARAYA, ALL RIGHT.
SO, ...DO YOU KNOW HOW I CAN FIND HIM?

?
WAIT A SEC--
ER...
DON'T YOU WORRY, MISS! WE JUST WANT YOU TO HANG WITH US AWHILE!
COME ON NOW, YOUNG LADY!
AH?!
THE HEAD PRIEST TOLD US TO CLEAN UP FAST AND GET OUT. BUT HEY, I TOLD HIM...
...ALL THAT LEFTOVER SAKE'S TOO DAMN HEAVY TO CARRY!
HUH?! YA TOLD HIM IT WAS TOO HEAVY?! HAW HAW! GOOD ONE!
Okay, maybe they can but I don't think so
GET US THREE GUYS TOGETHER WITH A KEG OF SAKE AND IT'S PARTY TIME! AND HAVIN' SOME CUTE YOUNG THING POUR FOR US, WELL... LIFE JUST DON'T GET ANY BETTER!
AND NOW... I REALLY AM IN A HURRY, SO...
YOU DAMN BRAT! APOLO-GIZE!

WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON OVER THERE..?
HEY MAN, AIN'T THAT ARAYA'S KID?

WELL? SPEAK!
YOU BROKE THE THONG ON LORD MAKIYURI'S SANDAL...
...AND YOU WON'T EVEN SAY "I'M SORRY"" ...?!
YOU BROKE IT YOURSELF, WHEN YOU KICKED MY PILE OF BAMBOO!
I HATE TO SAY IT, BUT... WELL, I JUST GOT DUMPED BY MY FAVORITE GEISHA.
SO I'M IN A BAD MOOD, BOY.
HUH! YOU PROBABLY DESERVED IT!
STUPID BRAT!
YOU HAD YOUR JUNK FILED UP RIGHT WHERE I WANTED TO WALK!
GUESS YOUR PARENTS DIDN'T TEACH YOU HOW TO APOLOGIZE PROPERLY, EH?
YOU'RE AN UNLUCKY KID.

I TOLD YOU I'M IN A BAD MOOD. DIDN'T I?!
I GUESS I'D BETTER NOT KILL YOU... I HATE THE PAPER-WORK.
BUT... ...
MAYBE AN EAR...?!
STOP!!

STAY OUT OF IT, GIRL!
YOU IDIOT! DON'T!
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
IT'S BECAUSE THERE'S NO SAMURAI LEFT IN THE WORLD BUT ONES LIKE YOU, DRAWING YOUR SWORD FOR THE STUPIDEST REASONS...
BECAUSE OF YOU AND THOSE LIKE YOU ..

...THAT PEOPLE LIKE HIM HAVE ARISEN.
OH, MAN... THIS IS BAD.

HONORED SIR!
THIS CHILD...
EVEN IF YOU WERE TO USE YOUR RIGHT OF KIRISUTE ON A CHILD LIKE THIS...
I BEG YOU TO OVERLOOK HIS INFRACTION THIS DAY.
...BUT PLEASE CONSIDER IT A FAILING OF YOUTH.
HE IS UNDER MY CARE.
I DO NOT KNOW WHAT INSULT HE HAS CAUSED YOU...

.. I FEAR IT WOULD ONLY BESMIRCH MY LORD'S GOOD NAME.
Hmph!
YOU KNOW YOUR MANNERS .. FOR A MISERABLE TOWN GIRL.
HUH?
I AM NOT.
I MAY BE REDUCED TO THIS, YET I AM STILL HEIRESS TO A SWORD SCHOOL.
WHERE?
IN HONJO, THE ASANO DŌJŌ, HEAD SCHOOL OF THE MUTENICHI-RYŪ.

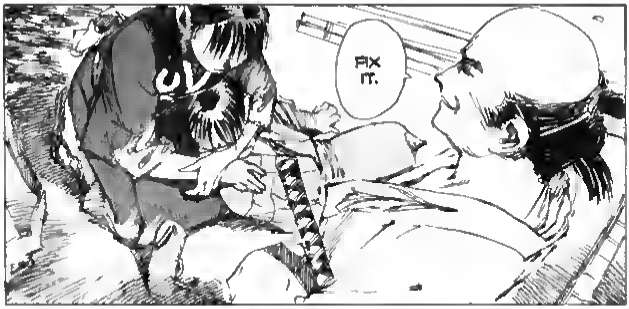
THAT PLACE...? WAIT A SEC... WASN'T IT...?
YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT. Hmm...
HAW...
HA HA HA HA HA!
YEAH, YEAH! NOW I REMEMBER! ASANO'S THAT GUY. THAT GUY WHO...

...WENT AND GOT HIMSELF KILLED, DIDN'T HE? COUPLE OF YEARS AGO. RIGHT, GIRL?
BY THOSE DOJO BUSTERS. THE FAMOUS ONES...
WHAT DO THEY CALL 'EM...? "IT", SOMETHING. IT...IT.
ITTŌ-RYŪ!
THAT'S THE ONE.
THANKS TO SOME FEUD BETWEEN THEIR GRAND-FATHERS.
..THEY GOT WIPED RIGHT OFF THE MAP. AIN'T THAT SO, GIRL?

YOU REALLY HAD ME GOING THERE, FOR A MOMENT.
OH, DEAR. WHAT A PITY. HUH-- YOU'RE SOME HEIRESS!
SEEING YOU HANGING OUT HERE ALL BY YOUR LONESOME, DIDN'T MAKE NO SENSE.
A GIRL YOUR AGE, WANDERING AROUND ALONE, USUALLY YOU'D GET PICKED UP BY A ZEGEN OR SOMETHING.
HERE YOU ARE, ALL PISSED OFF AT ME CALLING YOU A TOWN GIRL...
...WHEN YOU'RE REALLY SOMETHING WORSE-- JUST A TRAMP!
HELL, IF YOU GONNA BE A TRAMP...
...YOU'D BE BETTER OFF BEING A REAL TRAMP-- GET IT?! HAW!

DON'T, RENZO.

AH, HELL. NO BIG DEAL.
TELL YOU WHAT-- YOU WANT TO RUN AROUND WIPING THE KID'S ASS FOR HIM, THEN
.. DO ME A FAVOR.


FIX IT.

YOU SHUT--
I'LL DO IT.

HUH?!
HEY!! WHAT ARE--
LEMME GO! MOVE!
HEY!

HMM... WAIT A SEC. I'M STANDING IN THE DIRT, HERE.
BAD NEWS, EH?

THERE.
YEAH, THAT'S BETTER.
MMM
CLICK

WHOA ..!
oops!
HEY...!

GOOD SIR!
I... I'M FIN-ISHED.

HRM!
BETTER THAN BEFORE IT BROKE.
GOOD JOB.
THANK YOU.
WELL, KID? YOU LEARN ANYTHING? DEPENDING ON HOW YOU PLAY IT...
..YOU CAN GET OUTTA TROUBLE WITHOUT GETTING HURT.

SEEMS LIKE IF SHE PUTS HER MIND TO IT, EVEN A SAMURAI'S DAUGHTER'LL DO ANY-THING.
NO REASON YOU CAN'T, TOO. HUH? EH, KID?

BWA HAHA HAW!

WHY DIDN'T YOU TALK BACK TO HIM?
I MEAN, YEAH... I'M GLAD YOU SAVED ME AND ALL...
BUT JEEZ..!
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU COULD STAND IT..
YOU'RE THE DAUGHTER OF A SWORDS-MAN, RIGHT?
NORMALLY I WOULD HAVE LOST IT THEN AND THERE..
BUT...

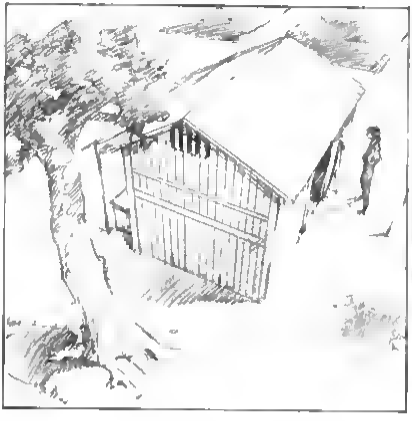
THEY SAY A PARENT NEVER LOOKS BIGGER THAN IN HIS OWN CHILD'S EYES.
SOME-THING LIKE THAT, MAYBE?
..IF I DID THAT, HE'D HAVE SLICED YOU UP RIGHT?
SO, WHEN I REALIZED THAT, I THOUGHT
"YOU'VE GOT TO STAY CALM, RIN."
I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT MY PARENTS ALL MORNING. MAYBE, YOU KNOW..

YOUR DAD. HE REALLY GOT KILLED...?
UH-HUH. BY MEN OF THE ITTŌ-RYŪ.
Hmm.. THE ITTŌ-RYŪ. HUH?
"ITTŌ-RYŪ"..
WHAT'S THAT?
HUH?
WHAT? OH, COME ON.
YOU'VE GOT TO KNOW THAT!

?
"GOT TO"..? WHY?
YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW?
NOPE.
KAWAKAMI ARAYA..!
JUST— WAIT A MINUTE! I MEAN.
I KNOW IT WAS HIM THAT NIGHT TWO YEARS AGO.
HE HAS TO KNOW .!
L-LOOK HERE YOUR DAD'S A, HE'S A..
MY DAD..?
AH! I ALMOST FOR-GOT!
RIN!
THAT WAS CLOSE!

YOU GOT SOME TIME?
WELL, YEAH, MAYBE.
I WASN'T PLANNING ANY--
THEN COME HOME WITH ME!
DAD ALWAYS SAYS, LIKE, IF SOMEBODY'S NICE TO YOU...
..HELPS YOU OUT AND STUFF, BRING THEM ON HOME!
IT'S TWO GUYS LIVING ALONE, SO THE PLACE IS A REAL DUMP, BUT..
WE CAN WHIP UP SOME TEA AND MOCHI AT LEAST.
A BAY CLUB BUT

HUH? WHAT'S WRONG?
AREN'T YOU COMING...?



WHAM!
THAT DAMN FOOL BRAT!
DOESN'T SHE HAVE ANY SENSE?!
HMM..
WAIT A SEC.. WHAT'S SHE GOING TO DO WITHOUT A SWORD?
あけて
ちゃうミみ
ゃつし
HERE WE GO AGAIN..
TO BE CONTINUED...!
NOTE: I'VE GONE TO FIND ARAYA. DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.

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